



## NATURAL APPROACH IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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**Annotation:** *This article depicts main features and benefits of the teaching methods called Natural approach. Based on many linguists' researches, this methods is defined as one of the best way to implement in language learning, since it based on analysis of the babies language acquisition process. When the process is copied to the adults' foreign language learning environment, super effective results have been observed so far. Moreover, detailed stages of natural approach is clearly explained throughout the article.*

**Key words:** *language acquisition, language learning, communicative skill, natural approach, task based learning, learning environment, silent period, comprehension.*

### **Introduction**

It is commonly admitted that language acquisition is considered one of the most complicated process and it requires a lot of hard work and dedication to achieve the desired outcome. And as a teacher I believe in this process not only learners' but also teachers' role is unprecedented and if they can work in cooperation by using correct learning and teaching method, expected results will be far more close to both participants. Obviously, for many centuries linguists have been trying hard to make the language learning process easier and have been offering different types of methods to facilitate language learners. The natural approach method was one of the most effective one which was developed by Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell in 1983, importantly, the method is based on the theory of language acquisition formed by Krashen. Main idea of this method is constructed on observations of how children acquire their first language and adapting the same process to adults' language learning environment.

### **Main Part**

It is important to mention that there are two distinctive ways of developing competence in a second language: they are acquisition and learning. Acquisition is an unconscious process that involves the naturalistic development of language proficiency through understanding and using language for meaningful communication. Conscious learning can function only as a monitor that checks and repair the output. Therefore, acquisition is always much better for learning comparing conscious learning (Brown, 2001). So that scholars have become adherences of naturalistic approach for a long time considering benefits of this method, additionally, they offers various ways to proceed the process effectively. For example, Krashen (1982) claims



that a lot of vocabulary should be exposed to the student as well as negative language should not be used during language learning process. Moreover, Natural approach method requires development of a lot of activities considering the importance of communicative skills instead of focusing on grammar-based language learning. The method emphasizes on various comprehensible activities and encourages learner to deal with new vocabulary. Main rule is that there should not be any usage of student's native language and any grammatical explanations. Second language should be basic means of communication from early stages of the learning process.

Supporting the ideas above Richards and Rodgers (2000) states that the natural approach rejects the formal organization of language. The natural approach works based on the use of language in communicative situations, without recourse to the native language and without reference to grammatical analysis. The natural approach is based on the principles of naturalistic language learning in young children. There is an emphasis on exposure on input. The central component of language is not grammar, it is communication so that the focus in the classroom should be on speaking and listening-reading (to receive the needed input). Importantly, students' work should center on meaningful communication rather than on form. Input should be interesting and so it should contribute to a relaxed atmosphere in classroom.

Terrell (1977) believes that learners take advantage from delaying production until speech "emerges," which learners should feel at ease as possible in class, as a result communication and "acquisition" process happens. Activities are suggested to develop with the help of total physical response method which is based on actions and comprehension (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Because, with the aid of total physical response method students do not feel threatened and forced into different situations that could embarrass them. As a result, eventually they start to speak out with self-confidence so that the usage of Total physical response activities is advocated by Natural Approach in early stages of language learning when "comprehensible input" is necessary to activate the acquisition of language.

As the Natural Approach focuses on language learners' communicative skills, it mainly includes daily conversations. Considering this type of situations first and foremost responsibility of teachers should be providing comprehensible input which can be suitable for students' level. Teacher plays the role of input source for learners as well as they can facilitate as a developer of different engaging and stimulating activities in classroom. It is important to mention that learners are not required to produce any sentence orally in foreign language till they feel ready to speak in that language and which period is called "silent period". According to Krashen and Terrell (1983) throughout the silent period learners should overcome three stages:

- First stage is called "*the preproduction stage*" and this period requires the improvement of comprehension skills mainly listening. I would offer implementation of listening related fruitful activities, songs and movies which learners feel enthusiastic.





•The second stage is *“the early production stage”* and it is estimated with language related mistakes and problems done by students. Instructors` center of attention should be on meaning not on the form and they should let students to jump production step. On this step teacher helps learners to express their feelings and ideas as well as self correction.

•The final stage is about developing production part into longer speech with the aid of more complex activities and discussions. As main purpose of this stage is enhancing fluency of learners` speech, teacher might encourage students to take accuracy into consideration during conversation in this stage. Usually language learners using the natural approach acquire mysterious intuition related to accuracy as they received huge amount of comprehensible input in early stages so that they don`t encounter much trouble to get good speaking skill.

However, on the other side, Thompson (1996) and other linguists admit that instructors usually insist language learners speak right away, and so we can take from the Natural Approach the good advice that for some period of time, while students get accustomed to the new language, their silence is useful.

### **Conclusion**

To sum up, there are great deal of possible purposes of language learning. Some learners of foreign language prefer to be able to communicate orally while others want for written communication or for only listening to lectures. As a teacher our responsibility is selecting the best method which can meet learners` expectations and facilitate their learning process and provided information above about natural approach proves that it is one very effective to use and meet the need of learners.

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